



The Gazette

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In the know

SPORTS

Tom Howe steps down as Stillwater boys lacrosse coach after leading Ponies to 47-4 record the past four seasons.

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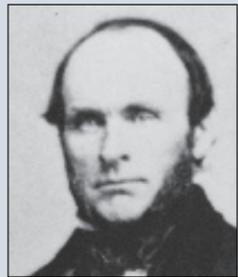
Senior Tristan Smith receives the Most Valuable Athlete Award for the Stillwater boys Nordic skiing team.

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Stillwater Area High School shows support for Class of 2020 and others as part of 'Be The Light' initiative.

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INSIDE



History – Brent Peterson features the flood of 1852 in his weekly history column.

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Your Voice – A school isn't a place and a classroom isn't a space without kids and staff, said the APG ECM editorial board.

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Public Safety – Stillwater police highlight notable crime and public safety issues in the city.

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Entertainment – Starting April 7, the North Hill Community Garden is accepting applications for Stillwater residents interested in renting a plot this season.

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FROM THE GAZETTE FILES

April 7, 1920 – The Washington County Rod and Gun Club stock 40,000 trout fingerlings in area creeks.

PUBLIC NOTICES

Legals – Keep up on the latest notices in your area.

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Stay-at-home order extended to May 4

BY ALICIA LEBENS
THE GAZETTE

BY STEVE KARNOWSKI
ASSOCIATED PRESS

Local leaders are preparing for another month of social distancing and its impacts on social and economic activity. Gov. Tim Walz on Wednesday extended Minnesota's stay-at-home order until May 4, saying his original order has bought the state valuable time to slow the spread of the coronavirus and should continue. The Stillwater City Council heard an update from city staff about the local efforts to combat the spread of the virus in the city April 7.

While city staff continue to process permit applications, building

inspections and other city business, buildings have been closed to public access.

"Starting last Monday, in observance of social distancing, we have been splitting some shift for our staff and having some work from home," said city administrator Tom McCarty.

City hall usually has about 25 people working at one time, McCarty said, but now will only have around six people in the building at once.

McCarty also told the council that city parks have been closed to deter gatherings and the city sidewalk stairs have been blocked.

"All event permits and park reservations have been canceled to the end

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Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz provides an update on the state's next steps to respond to COVID-19 during a news conference on Wednesday, April 8 in St. Paul, Minn. (Glen Stubbe/Star Tribune via AP, Pool)

McDowell to leave ISD 834

THE GAZETTE

At a special board meeting on April 2, the Hastings Public School District School Board voted to select Dr. Robert McDowell, assistant superintendent of Stillwater Area Public Schools as the district's new superintendent.

"The consensus was that Dr. Robert McDowell has the qualifications and skills to move the school district forward. We feel he will come into the position with an open mind, ready to listen, and committed to finding the best fit for the district, and we look forward to working with him," said board chair Kelsey Waits in a press release.

McDowell started working for Stillwater Area schools in 2015 as the executive director of learning and innovation. He was made assistant superintendent in 2019.

The pending start date for McDowell will be July 1.



The St. Croix River hit 686 feet as rain causes riverbanks to swell. (Photo by Alicia Lebens)

City builds levy on flooded St. Croix River

BY ALICIA LEBENS
THE GAZETTE

While most areas are focused solely on the impact of COVID-19, cities along the St. Croix River are taking step to limit the damage caused by flooded riverbanks.

On March 30, the National Weather Service forecast for the St. Croix River at Stillwater showed the river rising to minor flood stage with an estimated crest at 687.5' on April 6.

"We decided to be proactive,"

said Stillwater public works director Shawn Sanders told the city council April 7.

The city constructed a temporary levy at the lowest points of the riverbank in downtown Stillwater; along the North end at Mulberry Point, at Mrytle Street and at the Dock Cafe and the city's lift station at Nelson Street.

Parking Lots 2, 4, 9, 10, and 11 were also closed and the Lift and Loop Trail was closed from the Zephyr Theater to south of Downtown.

The river ultimately reached a height of 686 feet, Sanders said, noting that public works intended to keep the berm up for a couple more weeks in case of heavy rain.

As of March 30, the river level enacting the "Slow-No Wake Zone" from Taylors Falls to the Mississippi River in Prescott, Wis. Marinas and Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) public water accesses along the Saint Croix River will be posted advising of the "Slow-No Wake Zone."

Two Lake Elmo coffee roasters team up during pandemic

BY ALICIA LEBENS
THE GAZETTE

It was Mara Crombie dream to open a coffee shop, but realizing that dream has been far from easy.

The Lake Elmo resident tried unsuccessfully to open a coffee shop in 2016 in Lake Elmo, but was able to later purchase the former Coffee Cottage in downtown Mahtomedi in May 2017. Crombie renamed the shop Ox and Crow Coffeehouse — an ox to symbolize the hard-working farmers and the social crow to depict community. What followed was two years of intense road construction just outside their door.

"One summer they ripped up the road right in front of us," Crombie said. "The last project lasted 8 months until the road finally opened back up this past December."

During that time,



Marlene Dyer, front, and Mara Crombie work to package freshly roasted coffee at Ox and Crow Coffee Roasters in downtown Lake Elmo. (Submitted photo)

Crombie and her husband Bruce Peacock kept working on the business with a hope that business would be smoother once construction was complete. Bruce roasts the coffee for

the shop from small batch, single source green coffee beans, and the couple have built up a business of selling roasted beans to other shops and restaurants. On January 1, the pair signed

a lease to open a location just to roast coffee beans in downtown Lake Elmo, right across from Lake Elmo Inn.

With a good looking summer ahead, Mara and Bruce had a positive outlook for both the coffee shop and the new roastery.

"Then came the executive order to close our doors due to COVID-19," Crombie said. "We decided not to do take out — it wasn't worth the risk."

As their door shut to their own customers and their coffee bean clients soon to close their doors, Crombie said she worried about future.

"I don't really have a lot of skills when it comes to websites or social media," Crombie said. "We don't have an online store on our website set up."

The day after giving notice to customers that they would be closing due to the coronavirus restrictions, Crombie received

at fateful text message; "Hi Mara. It's Marlene Dyer with StirStix Coffee. I wanted to chat with you about our online store and offer you virtual shelf space so you can still provide your customers with bean deliveries while your store front is closed. Want to chat today?"

"If it hadn't been for Marlene's generous offer, we would not have made it these last few weeks," Crombie said.

Dyer, husband Jeremy and their four kids run StirStix Coffee Roasters out of their home in Lake Elmo. They have been roasting and selling small batches of coffee since November 2019.

"We started the business a way to teach the kids about owning a business," Dyer said. "I'm at home with the kids and my husband works full time so it isn't our main business,

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